

**To:** Shimada, Kenshu[KSHIMADA@depaul.edu]; Polly, P. David[pdpolly@indiana.edu]  
**Cc:** John Long[john.long@flinders.edu.au]; Emily Rayfield[glejr@bristol.ac.uk]; Serena Weisman[sweisman@faseb.org]; Foss, Scott[sfoss@blm.gov]  
**From:** Randall B Irmis  
**Sent:** 2017-05-02T07:44:39-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** RE: Executive Order and DOI press releases that may be relevant to SVP  
**Received:** 2017-05-02T07:44:43-04:00

Dear Kenshu, David, et al,

My apologies for not being in more contact about this over the past few weeks. I've been traveling quite a bit on my sabbatical and haven't been following up on this as I should.

The bottom line is that pretty much all areas of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase have high paleo potential (or proven resources). There are a few areas with lower resource potential, but they're relatively small and/or interwoven with the high potential areas. Its worth noting that this new executive order pertains to all national monuments designated since 1996, so that includes other monuments that have potential paleo resources such as Waco Mammoth, Basin & Range, Grand Canyon-Parashant, Upper Missouri River Breaks, Vermillion Cliffs, and probably other units where I'm not familiar with their geology.

A note that Thule Springs Fossil Beds N.M. is not affected because it was established by a bill passed by congress, not executive order.

That said, the political rhetoric makes clear that Trump's executive order is largely targeted at Bears Ears and Grand Staircase, especially given that this order was partly instigated by the urging of the Utah congressional delegation. The area of Grand Staircase that people are targeting for extraction is the Kaiparowits Plateau, which is really the epicenter of all the exciting paleontology that's being done. My impression for Bears Ears is that they'd like to open as much of it for exploitation as possible. There, the known fossil resources are concentrated in a couple of areas, but that's mainly just because its where folks have looked. These same geologic layers (Permian through Jurassic) extend throughout the monument and have high fossil potential throughout.

I personally think its important for SVP to make a public statement on the protection of fossil resources within national monuments \*before\* the Sect of Interior completes the review that this executive order requests.

Do let me know how I can help.

Regards,  
Randy

---

From: Shimada, Kenshu [KSHIMADA@depaul.edu]  
 Sent: Friday, April 28, 2017 10:09 AM  
 To: Polly, P. David  
 Cc: John Long; Emily Rayfield; Serena Weisman; Randall B Irmis; Foss, Scott  
 Subject: RE: Executive Order and DOI press releases that may be relevant to SVP

Hi David and all,

Please allow me to copy this response to Randy Irmis, and I do so because the Bears Ears and Grand Escalante Staircase are two particular monuments I regularly hear/see on news in regards to the new executive order. We shall wait to see what happens unless we are recommended to take specific proactive actions, but do I think we need to have some plans as to how to respond just in case. In particular, we would need information about the paleo-yield potential for all monuments under review (but

at least for the two aforementioned monuments which Randy is very familiar with) that can be promptly presented to the negotiating table \*IF\* we get a chance to respond. I'm sure there are certain areas in each monument that are more paleontologically sensitive than others, so \*IF\* the monument land is proposed to be reduced in size, we want to make sure we know which section(s) of each monument is/are 'non-negotiable' on the paleontological standpoint. What do you think?

Kenshu

-----Original Message-----

From: Polly, P. David [mailto:[pdpolly@indiana.edu](mailto:pdpolly@indiana.edu)]  
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2017 7:59 PM  
To: Foss, Scott  
Cc: Shimada, Kenshu; John Long; Emily Rayfield; Serena Weisman  
Subject: Re: Executive Order and DOI press releases that may be relevant to SVP

Dear Scott,

Thank you following through on our request for information about potential threats to National Monument designations.

As you know, SVP has an active interest in fossil resources on public lands. We are particularly concerned that the few protections that are in place remain so. The recent designation of Bears Ears Monument was an important advance in protecting fossil resources. As you know, SVP has been a long time advocate for protection of this area from damage to critically important fossil sites in the area. Many of our members have worked their entire careers in that region, as well as Grand Escalante Staircase, and are well aware of its scientific importance.

I am therefore astonished to read Secretary Zinke's statement that implies that the decision to protect these areas was made by people in Washington without input from those who "driven the trails or looked locals in the eye". Our members have not only driven the trails, but many of them are locals who are familiar with the landscape, the people, the resources, and the very real threats that faced these lands before they were protected. That is why we implored the previous Secretary to designate Bears Ears as a National Monument. I have attached one of the letters we sent as reference. For once we felt that the people along the Potomac were listening to those of us on the ground.

Please keep us informed how SVP can contribute to the consultation. Even though this action by President Trump and Secretary Zinke places an unnecessary burden on our members and leadership team to reiterate again the reasons for protecting these lands, we are nevertheless eager to do so. The protections afforded by these national monuments are critical to our science and to the national heritage associated with it.

With best wishes,  
David

P. David Polly

President, Society of Vertebrate Paleontology  
Professor, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences  
Adjunct Professor, Biology and Anthropology  
Indiana University  
1001 E. 10th Street  
Bloomington, IN 47405-1405  
[pdpolly@indiana.edu](mailto:pdpolly@indiana.edu)

+1 (812) 855-7994  
<http://pages.iu.edu/~pdpolly/>

On 27 Apr 2017, at 8:40 PM, Foss, Scott <[sfoss@blm.gov](mailto:sfoss@blm.gov)> wrote:

At your request, I am forwarding information that may be relevant to SVP.

Thank you for your interest.

S

<Executive Order, Review of Designations Under the Antiquities Act, April 26, 2017.pdf><Zinke 2017, Finally, rural America has a voice again, executive order on monument designations.pdf><Zinke 2017, Support of President Trump's American Energy Executive Order.pdf>